METHOD FOR EXPEDIENT SYNTHESIS OF [^{18}F]-LABELED α-TRIFLUOROMETHYL KETONES

This application claims the benefit of provisional application no. 60/429,602 filed on November 27, 2002, the content of which is incorporated herein by reference thereto.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to a method for the synthesis of [^{18}F]-labeled trifluoromethyl ketones. The invention more particularly relates to a method for the synthesis of [^{18}F]-labeled trifluoromethyl ketones by [^{18}F]-labeled fluorination of 2,2-difluoroenol silyl ethers.

BACKGROUND ART

There has been increasing interest in biologically active compounds known as α-Trifluoromethyl ketones (TFMKs). It has been found that many TFMK compounds have unique properties due to its α-trifluoromethyl ketone functionality. In example, TFMK's have been found to be potential hydrolytic enzyme inhibitors. In particular, TFMK's have been found to be inhibitors of protease

Kawase has reported that the trifluoromethyl group in the α-position of the carbonyl of the TFMK facilitates the formation of tetrahedral hemiketals or hydrates with water. The hydrated molecule interacts with protease, and inhibits the enzyme activity Kawase, M. *J. Syn. Org. Chem. Jpn.* **2001**, *59*, 755, which is incorporated herein by reference thereto.

It has also been demonstrated that TFMK's are cytotoxic agents against human oral tumor cell lines, such as human squamous carcinoma cells HSC-2 and salivary gland tumor cells HSG. Kawase, M.; Sakagami, H.; Kusama, K.; Motohashi, N.; Saito, S. *Bioorg. Med. Chem. Lett.* **1999**, *9*, 3113, incorporated herein by reference.

Traditionally, TFMKs are prepared from inexpensive trifluoroacetic acid derivatives. See, Creary, X. *J. Org. Chem.* **1987**, *52*, 5026; Keumi, T.; Shimada M.; Takahashi, M.; Kitajama, H. *Chem. Lett.* **1990**, 783. Both of which are incorporated herein by reference. Additionally, the present inventors have recently reported the direct preparation of TFMKs from carboxylic esters with (trifluoromethyl)trimethylsilane (TMS-CF_3). See, Wiedemann, J.; Heiner, T.;

Mloston, G.; Prakash, G. K. S.; Olah, G. A. *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **1998**, *37*, 820, which is incorporated herein by reference thereto.

Our reported method has been extended by others with CsF catalyzed trifluoromethylation of esters. Most recently we have developed a simple and convenient general synthesis of α-trifluoromethyl ketones by fluorination using elemental fluorine F_2 (Prakash, G. K. S.; Hu, J.; Alauddin, M. M.; Conti, P. S.; Olah, G. A. *J. Fluorine Chem.* **2003**, *121*, 239, incorporated herein by reference thereto.

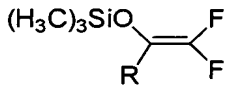
There is a need for an expedient process for radioactive labeling of TFMKs. However, the current synthesis methods are not suitable for the synthesis of [^{18}F]-labeled TFMKs since it is difficult to prepare [^{18}F]-labeled trifluoroacetic acid derivatives or TMS-CF_3 due to the short half-life of ^{18}F ($t_{1/2}$ =110 min).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The aforementioned need has been satisfied by the present invention which discloses the first synthesis of [^{18}F]-labeled TFMKs by fluorination of 2,2-difluoro silyl enol ethers with radioactive fluorine [^{18}F]-F_2.

The present invention is preferably directed to an expedient method for synthesizing [^{18}F]-labeled trifluoromethyl ketones from the fluorination of silyl enol ethers. Thus, it has now been discovered that TFMK compounds have the potential for radiolabeling with fluorine-18. Advantageously, the radiolabeled compounds can be used as markers for identification of cell proliferation, markers for identification of viral infection, or for PET imaging.

In accordance with the present invention, a method of synthesizing [^{18}F]-labeled α-trifluoromethyl ketones is provided by reacting [^{18}F]-F_2 under sufficient reaction conditions with a compound having the general formula 1, wherein R refers to an alkyl having 1 to 24 carbons or an aryl group having 6 to 24 carbon atoms.



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In one aspect of the invention, the alkyl or aryl group includes a ring. In another aspect of the invention, the alkyl group is substituted with at least one

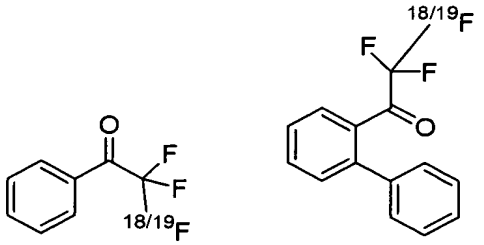
halogen, nitro group, or alkoxy group. In yet another aspect of the invention, the alkoxy group has one to eight carbon atoms. In another aspect of the invention, the alkoxy group is substituted with at least one substituent including an alkyl group having 1 to 8 carbon atoms, a halogen, an amino group, or any combination thereof. Advantageously, the substituent does not participate in the reaction.

In a preferred embodiment, the method further comprises dissolving the silyl ether compound in acetonitrile to form a solution; cooling the solution to about -50°to about -15°C; preparing a mixture of $[^{18/19}F]$-F_2 and nitrogen; and bubbling the mixture of $[^{18/19}F]$-F_2 and nitrogen into the solution for about 5 to 15 minutes to form a reaction mixture. $[^{18/19}F]$-F_2 can be prepared by bombardment with $[^{18}O]O_2$ in a cyclotron and mixing with non-radioactive F_2.

The silyl ether is preferably 2,2-difluoroenol silyl ether and may be prepared by mixing magnesium, tetrahydrofuran, and chlorotrimethylsilane to form a reactant mixture; cooling the mixture to between about -15° C to 5°C; adding trifluoroacetophenone to the cooled mixture; and stirring the mixture for about 0.5 to 1.5 hours to produce the difluoroenol silyl ether.

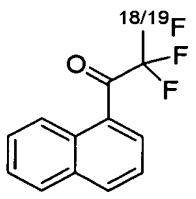
The $[^{18}F]$-labeled trifluoromethylketones that are synthesized generally have a radiochemical purity greater than 99% and specific activities between about 15 to 20 GBq/mmol at the end of synthesis. They are produced at yields of between about 45 to 55%.

Several $[^{18}F]$-labeled α-trifluoromethyl ketones have been synthesized by the present method. Compounds 2a~2d shown below have been successfully synthesized in accordance with the method of the invention.

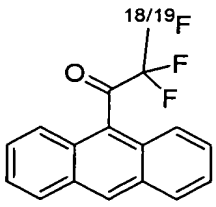


2a

2b



2c



2d

Also in accordance with the present invention is an imaging agent comprising the $[^{18}F]$-labeled α-trifluoromethyl ketones synthesized from the method of the

invention. In one aspect of the invention, the imaging agent is useful for positron emission tomography (PET) imaging.

The invention also relates to a marker that can be used for detecting cell proliferation or for detecting viral infection. The marker of the invention comprises the [^{18}F]-labeled α-trifluoromethyl ketones synthesized according to the method of the invention and preferably includes those having a radiochemical purity of about 99%.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention is better understood by reference to the drawings figures, wherein:

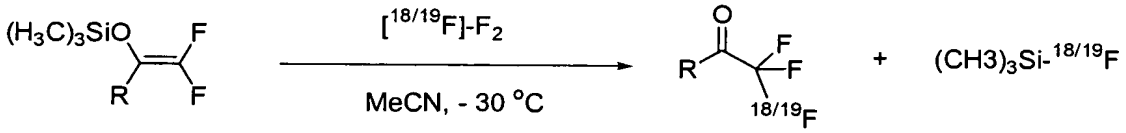
Figure 1 illustrates a chromatogram of purified labeled trifluoromethyl ketones;

Figure 2 illustrates a HPLC chromatogram of a labeled trifluoromethyl ketone; and

Figure 3 illustrates a radio TLC of a labeled trifluoromethyl ketone of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention relates to a general and expedient method for the preparation of [^{18}F]-labeled trifluoromethyl ketones. In accordance with the method of the invention, a fluorination reaction between [^{18}F]-labeled F_2 and 2,2-difluoroenol silyl ether **1** produces [^{18}F]-labeled trifluoromethyl ketones **2** as shown below. The R group of 2,2-difluoroenol silyl ethers **1** preferably include an alkyl or aryl group.



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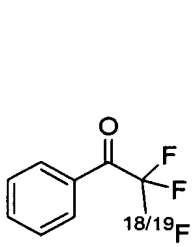
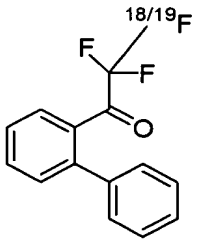
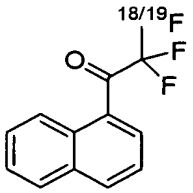
As noted above, radiolabeled trifluoromethyl ketone compounds 2a~2d, shown below, have been successfully synthesized in accordance with the method of the invention.



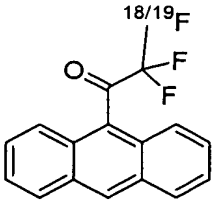
2a



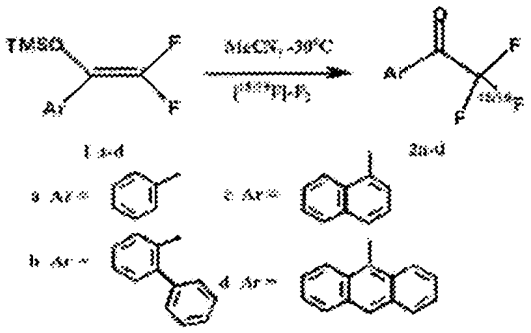
2b



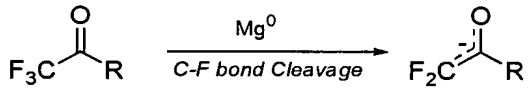
2c



2d



In accordance with one aspect of the invention, difluoroenol silyl ether compounds 2a-d, shown above, can be prepared from a mixture of compound 1, which is shown below, TMSCl, and Mg[11] in anhydrous THF or DMF. The mixture is stirred for about 15 to 30 minutes, preferably 20 minutes, at a temperature between about -10° C to about 5°C, and preferably at 0°C.



Difluoroenol silyl ether is obtained after filtration. The R of compound 1 includes but is not limited to Ph, 4-$MeOC_6H_4$, 4-$CF_3C_6H_4$, 4-ClC_6H_4, 2-furyl, 2-thienyl, C_6H_{13}, or Cy. The method is disclosed in Amii, H.; Kobayashi, T.; Hatamoto, Y.; Uneyama, K. *Chem. Comm.* **1999**, 1323, the entire content of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference. Preferably, tetrabutylammonium fluoride with D_2O is added to the THF or DMF for the preparation of the difluoro enol silyl ethers, as disclosed in Prakash, G. K. S.; Hu, J.; Olah, G. A. *J. Fluorine Chem.* **2001**, *112*, 357), the entire content of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference. It has

been found that silyl enol ethers produced by this preferred method have greater stability for hydrolysis compared to other silyl enol ethers. Although the stability of the silyl ethers enable simple handling without decomposition, freshly prepared compounds were used for radiolabeling experiments.

The goal compounds, [^{18}F]-labeled trifluoromethyl ketones, were prepared by fluorination of 2,2-difluoroenol silyl ethers **1** with [$^{18/19}$F]-F_2. The [$^{18/19}$F]-F_2 was produced in the cyclotron by bombardment of [^{18}O]O_2 followed by mixing the target gas with non-radioactive F_2. The mixture of [$^{18/19}$F]-F_2 was bubbled into the solution of the substrates 2,2-difluoroenol silyl ethers at low temperature for efficient trapping of activity. Trapping of activity was quite efficient for 2-3 mg (~ 10 μmol) of the precursors. Since the syntheses were carrier added, a sufficient amount of F_2 was present, resulting in absence of any unreacted starting material in the reaction mixture.

Reactions of 2,2-difluoro-1-aryl-1-trimethylsiloxyethenes with [^{18}F]-F_2 at low temperature produced [^{18}F]-labeled α-trifluoromethyl ketones. The radiolabeled products were isolated by purification with column chromatography in 22-28% yields, and were decay corrected (d. c.) in 3 runs per compound. The radiochemical purity was greater than 99%, with specific activities of 15-20 GBq/mmol at the end of synthesis (EOS). The synthesis time was 35-40 min from the end of bombardment (EOB). This one step simple method is highly useful for the radiochemical synthesis of potential biologically active [^{18}F]-labeled α-trifluoromethyl ketones for PET.

Trifluoromethyl ketones can form hydrated products in the presence of water which can cause difficulties during HPLC purification using MeCN/H2O solvent system. However, compound 2c was found to be relatively stable in aqueous system during HPLC purification and pure product was isolated in good yield (54%). Referring to Figure 1, purification of 2c is represented by a chromatogram. The desired product was eluted in 13 to 15 minutes, which could then be isolated in pure form.

Referring to Figure 2, analysis of pure product 2c by HPLC showed two radioactive and three UV active peaks. The UV peaks compared to the hydrated product (a), partial hydrated product (b), and trifluoromethyl ketone (c). Only two radioactive peaks were observed corresponding to the hydrated product (a) and the ketone (c) and the ratio between the ketone and hydrated product was approximately 10:90.

In order to verify the reactivity of the trifluoromethyl ketones with water a pure 18F-labeled product collected by HPLC in CH3CN/water was heated for a short time of 1 to 2 minutes. Analysis of the product by either HPLC and TLC demonstrated 100% hydrated compound.

Although the other radiolabeled ketones could not be purified by HPLC since the products readily converted to the hydrated compound and eluted much earlier than the desired ketones, the radiolabeled ketones were in fact purified by chromatography on a small silica gel column and eluted with the organic solvent mixture, ethyl acetate and hexane (10:90). Fractions (0.5 mL) of the product were collected and radioactivity was measured on a dose calibrator. The products were eluted in the earlier fractions with an r.f. value of approximately 0.8. Pure fractions after combining were analyzed by TLC and found to be co-eluted with authentic sample checked by both UV and radioactivity.

Referring to Figure 3 illustrated is a representative radio TLC for the compound 2b where **a** is the point of application and **b** is the solvent front.

In non-radioactive preparations excess F_2 was used and the chemical yields were greater than 80%. However, in the radiochemical syntheses only 50% of the activity is incorporated into the substrate resulting lower yields in the range of 22-28% (d. c.) from the EOB. The radiochemical purity was greater than 99% with specific activities of 15-20 GBq/mmol. The synthesis time was 35-40 min from the EOB. In a representative preparation of **2b**, 30 mCi of labeled product was obtained starting from 120 mCi of trapped activity [^{18}F]-F_2.

The present invention will be further understood by the examples set forth below, which are provided for purpose of illustration and not limitation.

EXAMPLES

In the following examples, all reagents and solvents were purchased from Aldrich Chemical Co. (Milwaukee, WI), and used without further purification, unless otherwise specified. Dichloromethane (CH_2Cl_2) and fluorotrichloromethane ($CFCl_3$) were distilled over calcium hydride (CaH_2), and acetonitrile (MeCN) was distilled over phosphorus pentoxide (P_2O_5) prior to use.

^{1}H, ^{13}C and ^{19}F NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker 500 or 360 MHz NMR spectrometer in chloroform-D using tetramethysilane and trichlorofluoromethane as internal standards, respectively. Mass spectra were

obtained on a Hewlett Packard 5890 Gas Chromatograph equipped with a Hewlett Packard 5971 Mass Selective Detector.

Column chromatography was performed using silica gel (60-200 mesh) and ethyl acetate/hexane (10:90) as eluent. Thin layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on a silica gel plate (1x10 cm) and developed in the appropriate solvent system ethyl acetate/hexane (10:90). Radioactivity on the developed TLC plate was scanned on a TLC scanner (Bioscan Inc., Washington D. C.) to obtain a radiochromatogram.

Example 1: Preparation of 2,2-difluoroenol silyl ethers (1a-d):

2,2-difluoroenol silyl ethers (1a-d) were prepared from their respective ketones by magnesium metal mediated reductive defluorination.

To a dry 250 ml Schlenk flask the following compounds were added: magnesium turnings (1.45 g, 60 mmol), dry tetrahydrofuran (THF, 120 ml) and chlorotrimethylsilane (TMSCl, 13.0 g, 120 mmol). The flask was cooled to 0°C. 2,2,2-Trifluoroacetophenone (non-radioactive) 2a (5.2 g, 30 mmol) was added drop wise into the flask with a syringe. After addition of the 2,2,2-Trifluoroacetophenone, the reaction mixture was stirred for an additional 1h. The completion of the reaction was monitored by ^{19}F NMR spectroscopy. The solvent and excess TMSCl were removed under vacuum, and hexane (50 ml) was added to the residue. Solid impurities were removed by suction filtration, and the solvent was evaporated to yield 2,2-difluoro-1-phenyl-1-trimethylsiloxyethene 1a (6.8 g, 99% yield).

The product was characterized by ^{1}H and ^{19}F NMR spectroscopy and mass spectrometry. Spectroscopic data were consistent with the literature for 2,2-difluoro-1-phenyl-1-trimethylsiloxyethene. ^{1}H NMR: δ= 0.60 (s, 9H), 7.38 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.47 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 7.61 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H); ^{13}C NMR: δ= 0.02, 114.09 (q, $^{2}J_{C\text{-}F}$ = 18.0 Hz), 125.84, 127.72, 128.25, 132.71, 154.87 (t, $^{1}J_{C\text{-}F}$ = 286.8 Hz); ^{19}F NMR: δ= -100.39 (d, $^{2}J_{F\text{-}F}$ = 68.0 Hz), -112.16 (d, $^{2}J_{F\text{-}F}$ = 68.0 Hz). MS(70 eV, m/z): 228 (M^{+}), 213, 197, 186 (, 177, 131, 115, 105, 89, 81, 77, 73.

Compounds having the formulae 1b-d were also characterized by ^{1}H and ^{19}F NMR spectroscopy and mass spectrometry.

Example 2: Preparation of [^{18}F]-α-trifluoromethyl ketones (2a-d)

Experiments were performed under similar conditions as described in Example 1.

2,2-Difluoro-1-phenyl-1-trimethylsiloxy-ethene 1a (2 μL, 11 μmol) was dissolved in dry acetonitrile (0.5 ml) and cooled to -45°C. A mixture of fluorine [$^{18/19}$F]-F_2 and nitrogen (F_2/N_2 (v/v = 1/8)) was bubbled into the solution for 10 min. Radioactivity was measured on a dose calibrator (Capintec Inc., Ramsey, New Jersey), and the reaction mixture was warmed to room temperature.

The crude product was purified by chromatography on a silica gel column using 10% ethyl acetate in hexane as eluent. Fractions (0.5 mL) were collected and radioactivity was measured. Fractions containing radioactivity were combined and solvent was evaporated to obtain the pure product. The product was analyzed by TLC with an authentic compound as a reference. The TLC plate after development was scanned for radioactivity on a TLC scanner, checked under UV lamp and compared with the reference compound. Analysis of the TLC plate showed the material to be 99% pure. Radiochemical yield was 22% (d. c).

Compounds 2b-d were produced in similar radiochemical yields in the range of 22 – 28% (d. c).

It is understood that the foregoing detailed description and accompanying examples are merely illustrative and are not to be taken as limitations upon the scope of the invention, which is defined solely by the appended claims and their equivalents. Various changes and modifications to the disclosed embodiments will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Such changes and modifications, including without limitation those relating to the chemical structures, substituents, derivatives, intermediates, syntheses, and or methods of use of the invention, can be made without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.